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School Principals' Standards and Expectations in Three Educational Contexts

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**Expectations for the Preparation of School Principals in Three Jurisdictions:
Sweden, Ontario and Texas**
**Attentes concernant la préparation des directeurs d'écoles dans trois juridictions:
la Suède, l'Ontario et le Texas**

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Abstract

This study presents a comparative document analysis of expectations for principals within principal preparation programs in the counties of Sweden, the province of Ontario, Canada, and the State of Texas, USA. Dimmock and Walker's (2005) *Cross-cultural Comparative Framework for Studying Educational Leadership* was utilized to examine and compare these expectations within principal preparation policies. We determined that while the framework was a suitable starting point for analyzing cultural differences among these three jurisdictions, some of the framework categories were not suitable for a document analysis. We propose, nevertheless, that the framework can be employed not just to analyze principals' practices, but also to explore policies that constrain practice.

Résumé

Cette étude présente une analyse comparée de document des attentes concernant les directeurs d'écoles dans les programmes de préparation de chefs d'établissement dans les comtés de la Suède, dans la province d'Ontario, au Canada, et dans l'état du Texas, aux États-Unis. Le *Cadre Cross-Culturel et Comparatif pour l'Étude du Leadership Éducationnel* conçu par Dimmock et Walker (2005) a été utilisé pour examiner et comparer ces attentes incluses dans les politiques de préparation des directeurs d'école. Nous avons déterminé que, tandis que le cadre ait été un point de départ approprié pour l'analyse des différences culturelles entre ces trois juridictions, certaines catégories dudit cadre n'étaient pas adaptées pour une analyse de document. Néanmoins, nous proposons que le cadre puisse être utilisé non seulement pour analyser les pratiques des directeurs d'école, mais également pour explorer les politiques qui entravent la pratique.

Keywords: comparative educational policies, school principal; principal requirements
Mots-clés: directeurs d'école; leadership éducationnel; préparation de directeur d'école

School principals play an important role in the lives of students. Along with teachers, principals can promote educational change, reform, and improvement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, Wahlstrom, & Mascall, 2009). However, efforts to take what works in one school leadership situation and utilize it in another context have proven to be challenging (see Bishop & Mulford, 1999; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010). Dimmock and Walker (2000; 2005) argue, in this century, education has ceased to be a *national* industry, stating, "policy makers and practitioners are increasingly adopting policy blueprints, management structures, leadership practices, and professional development programs fashioned in different cultural settings while giving little consideration to their cultural fit" (p. 147). Part of the process in attempting to decipher what might be mobilized into another context or jurisdiction has led to increased attention to comparative research initiatives, particularly across national borders (see Billiot, Goddard & Cranston, 2007; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Wallin, 2005).

As research members of the International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP) consortium, we are aware of the complexity of comparative international research. The ISSPP, a consortium in existence since 2001, includes participants from approximately 20

countries and has produced over 100 case studies, each using the same theoretical framework and methodological approach. The majority of cases are country-specific and generated by researchers familiar with the jurisdiction. Advanced analysis of these cases consists of comparing leadership across diverse contexts (Day & Leithwood, 2007). In our efforts to compare our cases from Sweden, the province of Ontario (Canada), and the state of Texas (USA), we have been engaged in an ongoing dialogue since 2011 about how to understand the case findings within each context, how to understand the others' contexts and findings, and how to compare these findings. Many of the discussions concentrate on clarifying meanings within particular contexts. This process led us to consider how principals are prepared for school leadership positions and what is expected of them. This study presents a comparative document analysis of expectations for principals within principal preparation programs in Sweden, Ontario, Canada, and Texas, USA. We utilize Dimmock and Walker's *Cross-cultural Comparative Framework for Studying Educational Leadership* to specifically explore how the various dimensions within societal cultures can be used to examine and compare expectations of principals within principal preparation policies in these three jurisdictions.

The jurisdictions in this study had each recently revised their expectations for principals between 2009 and 2014. The expectations stem from different contextual configurations, but aim at the same result: the preparation of school principals who can generate successful schools and successful students. Sweden, a country with a smaller context (when compared to Canada and the USA), articulates the expectations for principals at a national level. Since Canada and the US have regional/state specific expectations, we observed the expectations for principals in the province of Ontario and the State of Texas.

Rationale and Significance

We purposefully selected the three jurisdictions for a number of reasons. The first reason was pragmatic. All three researchers were part of a larger network of researchers and completed cases that utilized the same theoretical framework and methodologies from each of these places. Each of us was willing to collaborate to seek deeper meaning from our case study findings and we were all accessible to each other. More specifically, each jurisdiction had just recently revised principal expectations. We observed, for example, that during the last two decades, various global economic, cultural, and political forces have had an impact on Swedish society (Daun, 2003). These changes, along with an enhanced focus on academic results, has prompted revisions in expectations for principals. In turn, a push to link student performance and principal leadership in Texas under a new Commissioner of Education (TEA, 2013) led to invigorating discussions over how to evaluate school principals and make expectations more current. Meanwhile, in Ontario, the leadership branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education, in consultation with Ontario's professional associations such as the Ontario Principals' Council and the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (2001) just finished their revision of expectations for principals in 2012. Reflecting on our conversations, we decided that investigating principal preparation and expectations was probably the most appropriate starting point to begin an informative cross-culture case comparison.

Principal Preparation

To date, the preparation of school principals and headmasters is not uniform or similar across countries (Brundrett, 2001; Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Hallinger, 2003). Even in countries in which school systems are somewhat similar with, for example, nations with public and private systems—or public and religious systems—the preparation of school principals is still what Cowie and Crawford (2007) call an “act of faith” (p. 129). Some jurisdictions require teaching experience and/or a master's degree; some require the principal to be certified

through an established exam; others may require little educational experience or fewer educational credentials prior to obtaining a position. Preparation programs differ in pre-service preparation in universities and certifying state/regional/national entities, and in-service preparation with or without certification. For example, England is divided between a university model to prepare principals, and a national “competency” based model, while the US seems to more closely align university programs, and national and state expectations.

Changes in the role of principals have prompted consideration of their preparation. Regardless of the ways principals are prepared, all approaches are influenced by both the local context and inescapable global trends, according to Johnson, Möller, Ottesen, Pashiardis, Savvides, and Vedoy (2011). These authors recognized that “rapid technological innovation, mobility, and globalization have resulted in new challenges for school leaders across many countries” (p. 153). Similarly, in the USA, Mathews and Crow (2010) argued that changes in post-industrial society influenced education through the development of a knowledge society, technological advances, demographic changes, and public accountability demands—which have increased the complexity of the principal’s role, and complicated the preparation and socialization of new principals.

In an effort to respond to both local needs and global pressures, educational jurisdictions develop guidelines, standards, and expectations for principals. The recent revisions in documents articulating the expectations for principal-in-preparation programs in this study’s jurisdictions suggest a response to the dramatic change in expectations of principals in their role.

Methods

In this article we examine the expectations for principals in principal preparation programs in Sweden, the province of Ontario (Canada) and the state of Texas (USA) through a comparative document analysis. Using one of the two meta-categories of Dimmock and Walker’s (2005) *Cross-cultural Comparative Framework for Studying Educational Leadership* (Table 1), we examine and compare expectations of principals within principal preparation policies.

Table 1. Dimensions of Societal Cultures Influencing Schools*

- Power-distributed/Power-concentrated
- Group-oriented/Self-oriented
- Consideration/Aggression
- Proactivism/Fatalism
- Generative/Replicative
- Limited relationship/Holistic relationship

*Adapted from Dimmock and Walker’s (2005) dimensions of societal and organizational culture, p. 29.

Dimmock and Walker (2005) recognize that culture is reflected in “all aspects of school life, and people, organizations and societies share differences and similarities in terms of their cultures...” (p. 146). They divided the original framework into two broad categories of culture: societal cultures, and organizational cultures. In this study of different jurisdictions, societal culture is relevant due to “enduring set of values, beliefs, and practices that distinguish one group of people from another” (p. 12). The aforementioned authors explain that organizational cultures can be “managed and changed, whereas societal cultures are more enduring and change only gradually over long time periods, if at all” (p. 32). In their

research, the authors explore organizational culture at the school site level; our unit of analysis does not allow this as we are exploring policies from the jurisdictional level of nation/province/state rather than individual school sites. For this reason, our analysis concentrates on the six dimensions of societal culture.

Procedures

We developed a comparative document analysis to explore the preparation policies in each jurisdiction. Document analysis, which is prevalent in cross-cultural research (Merriam, 1988), is a systematic method for reviewing documents. The motivation for the development of this research was to gain supplementary research data and additional knowledge for further comparison of ISSPP case studies conducted in Sweden, Ontario, and Texas. Rather than identifying emerging themes throughout a set of documents we utilized predefined themes generated from part of Dimmock and Walker's (2005) framework to discover similarities, differences, and variations.

Analysis

The documents analyzed are a specific type of document: policies and guidelines for principal preparation. The documents included: The Goals of the National School Leadership Training Programme (Sweden) formulated by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2010) based on a national ordinance (SFS 2011:83, 2011); The Ontario Leadership Framework (2012) from the Ontario Ministry of Education; and the Texas' Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards Subchapter BB. Administrator Standards (New 19 TAC §149.2001, TEA, 2014a). Other supporting documents included in the analysis were:

- Skolverket (Swedish National Agency for Education), (2009a): National Tests and Assessment Support
- Skolverket (Swedish National Agency for Education), (2009b): Statistics and Evaluations
- Activities of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2014)
- The Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800, 2010)
- Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö98 Revised (Lpfö98, 2010)
- Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Preschool Class and the Recreation Centre (Lgr11, 2011)
- Council of Chief State School Officers (2013) Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for Educational Leaders
- Texas Education Agency (2014d), What's new on performance reporting
- Texas Education Agency (2014b), STARR resources
- Texas Education Agency (2014c), Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)
- The Ontario College of Teachers (2012) Standards of Practice
- A school and System Leader's Guide to Putting Ontario's Leadership Framework into Action
- Ontario Leadership Framework (2012) Discussion of the Research Foundations

The process of comparative policy analysis for this study was rather complex as each researcher came to the analysis from a different jurisdiction and had unique understandings, cultural norms, and practices. Our engagement with the comparative document analysis included not just coding based on Dimmock and Walker's framework, but also dialoguing about the policies and themes observed. Dialoguing about policy or "policy dialogues" are known to serve multiple purposes; they may be utilized by policy makers to inform policy

and can take on a number of arrangements from government consultations, citizen juries, citizen groups, polling, and focus groups (Canadian Policy Research Network, 2000). Policy dialogues that do not inform policy, also known as “dialogue events” are emerging and tend to be considered sites of individual learning and opportunity for teaching (Pollock & Winton, 2011).

Policy dialogues are a powerful tool to support comparative policy analysis. We argue this because as Joshee and Johnson (2007) point out, a policy dialogue is “a process through which the parties involved convey their own sense of, position on, and story about an issue” (p. 5). In this case each of us represented one of the jurisdictions and, first, had to convey the national/provincial/state position on various education issues connected to principal preparation and expectations. Lastly, we each had to share the events of how our representative jurisdictions came to be in terms of principal preparation and expectations. Besides each researcher reviewing documents for principal preparation and expectations from their own educational context, and later, the other two jurisdictions, we engaged in an ongoing policy dialogue over a 12-month period. During these months we met virtually 4 times, engaged in 3 phone conversations, had 3 face-to-face meetings, exchanged up to 35 emails and presented drafts of this article at 4 different international education conferences where we received feedback on this research.

As our lengthy policy dialogues progressed it became clear that we also had to first provide general context for each jurisdiction, then information about the education system, and then narrow the study to principal preparation and expectations for principals. A brief comparison of each jurisdiction is included in Table 2 to provide the context where principals work and to allow the reader to make deeper connections to the findings. Next, we provide a general synopsis of principal preparation and expectations for each jurisdiction.

Table 2. Summary of Demographic Trends, School Governance, Context, and Accountability in Sweden, Ontario, Canada, and Texas, USA

	Sweden	Ontario (Canada)	Texas (USA)
Demographic Trends	Around 1.2 million attend the compulsory and upper secondary schools, and 500,000 children are enrolled in preschool.	Two million school-age children attend public school. Ontario has the second most diverse population: 23% of visible minority groups and 2% of aboriginal peoples.	Five million school-age children attend 1,236 public school districts, 8003 public schools and 552 charters in Texas. 55% of students are Hispanic.
School Governance	Decentralized and partially de-regulated. The national level provides binding laws and regulations. 290 municipalities and independent school boards are responsible authorities.	Limited federal role in education. Schooling in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction. Ontario has 72 district school boards across 4 publicly funded school systems: English, French, English-Catholic, and French-Catholic.	Limited federal role in education. Education in Texas is primarily a State and local responsibility. The US government provides about 10% of funding from the federal budget to support schools.
Context	The country provides schooling from preschool to university.	Schooling is compulsory for students in kindergarten through secondary.	Schooling is compulsory for students between 6 and 18 years old.
Accountability	Increased testing and control. National subject tests in compulsory schools (grades 3, 6, and 9) and course tests in upper secondary schools. Test results are made public on-	Low stakes, but school-level student achievement test scores are publicly reported and manipulated by non-governmental organizations.	High stakes - students are tested under the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness in reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies (for students in grades 3-8) and English I/ II,

line. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate checks that schools comply with legislation.

algebra I, biology, and US history by the end of high school. The Texas Education Agency supervises all aspects of school performance.

Expectations for Swedish Principals

The recruitment of principals and preschool heads in Sweden is the responsibility of the school head. Through the Education Act (SFS 2010:800, 2010), Sweden prescribes the qualifications for principals and preschool heads. To be employed, principals must have demonstrated pedagogical understanding of the curriculum (Lpfö98, 2010; Lgr11, 2011), and have a certain amount of training and experience. There is no demand for any special exam or preparation before employment.

The training of practicing principals was introduced at the end of the 1960s, with the provision of short-term courses in a number of pedagogical and administrative areas. In 1976, the Swedish Parliament introduced a two-year national training programme for all school leaders. The purpose was to better equip school leaders in the development of schools in line with the national objectives. That purpose is still current for school leadership training in Sweden (Törnsén, 2009, 2010). The National School Leadership Training Programme (NSLTP), instituted in 2009, ensures that school leaders are prepared to lead educational activities, and ensures that the rights of pupils and parents are respected. The program is the responsibility of the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2010). The National Agency for Education evaluates the preparation program, which is delivered by six universities. The program is focused on advancing the academic knowledge of principals. School leadership is evaluated through their inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2012).

The target group for the NSLTP includes pre-school heads, principals and vice/deputy principals in municipal and independent schools from preschool to adult education, and schools following national curricula and the Education Act (SFS 2010:800, 2010). The program became mandatory for principals hired after March 2010, who have not taken the former national school leadership or any similar program, but optional for pre-school heads and vice/deputy principals. In their study of the new principal preparation programs, Johansson and Svedberg (2013) recognized that “the new educational market-like context require principals who can understand the formal and informal aspects of the educational system and be in charge of their schools” (p. 4). NSLTP’s vision and goal are as follows:

Head teachers, heads of preschools and assistant heads all play a key role in centrally regulated education that is governed by the curricula. The task is to create a school and preschool of high-quality for everyone where the national goals are achieved and learning is experienced as meaningful, stimulating and secure. The National School Leadership Training Programme aims at providing head teachers, heads of preschools and other school leaders with the knowledge and skills required to be able to manage their responsibilities and achieve the goals set up.

The training program covers three integrated areas of knowledge: (a) legislation on schools, (b) management by goals and objectives, and (c) school leadership. Following is a summary of the policy (Skolverket, 2010):

A. Legislation on schools and the role of exercising the functions of an Authority covers provisions in laws and ordinances. Emphasis is put on how the school’s assignment is formulated within the national goals. Requires knowledge and understanding of:

- Structure of the steering system and the head teacher’s tasks in accordance with legislation,
- Fundamental values in the legislation concerning schools,

- Legislation applicable to the school's area of operations,
- The individual's right to education, and responsibility for the provision of such education,
- The school's responsibility for ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to attain the national goals,
- Assessing the child's/pupil's development in relation to the national goals and grading, and also the obligation to provide the child/pupil with remedial support,
- The child's/pupil's right to a secure environment that is conducive to learning, and also the obligation to ensure that this exists,
- Follow up and evaluation of activities and results,
- Knowledge of international agreements and legislation affecting the area of education.

Skills and abilities:

- To apply knowledge of applicable legislation in the school area, as well as making assessments, and
- To communicate and apply knowledge of existing legislation in the school area.

Assessment ability and approaches:

- Make assessments in the area of school legislation with respect to the legal security of pupils, and relevant scientific, societal and ethical aspects.

B. Management by goals and objectives covers measures for promoting quality required for schools to achieve the national goals, and create the conditions for its development. Requires knowledge and understanding of:

- National goals, their background, and the role of the school in society,
- Principles of the central regulatory system and their interaction, as well as the conditions governing work in a politically steered organisation,
- Scientific foundations for follow up and evaluation,
- Tools and methods used for analysis and assessing both pupils and the results of various activities,
- Different methods for quality monitoring and quality development,
- Conditions affecting pupils' development and learning processes, as well as strategies for promoting these.

Skills and abilities:

- To explain the goals of the school, make these clear, and transform them into concrete actions,
- To communicate the national goals,
- To use different tools and methods to follow up and evaluate results of their own school,
- To compile, analyse, and interpret the school's results.

Assessment ability and approaches:

- Integrate the school's daily work with pupils' results and development of quality in the school,
- Evaluate and communicate the school's results as a basis for further development.

C. School leadership covers how the work should be managed based on the principles associated with national goals. Requires knowledge and understanding of:

- What typifies the school as a learning organisation,
- Different theories and principles for organizational development,
- Effects of different leadership strategies on the performance of co-workers in order to enhance their development at individual and group levels,

- The importance of organisational culture in determining processes for bringing about change.

Skills and abilities:

- As the head and leader of school personnel, to manage and delegate work in order to maximise the learning and development of pupils,
- As head and leader to motivate, initiate, and manage the school's development processes in a strategic way in order to encourage the interest of school personnel in learning and development,
- To manage and resolve conflicts,
- To communicate future plans and visions;
- To communicate goals and results to pupils in the school, to personnel and parents,
- To demonstrate the ability to apply the principle of the equal value of all people.

Assessment ability and approaches:

- Provide explicit focus on the national assignment of the school,
- Provide a democratic model to pupils and personnel by creating an open communicative climate,
- Emphasize the importance of cooperation,
- Involve the participation of pupils and parents in the work of the school,
- Give appropriate prominence to the values laid down in the school's steering documents.

Upon completion, principals are expected to have knowledge and skills required to meet the objectives of the school, preschool, leisure time centre, or adult education, as well as fulfilling tasks in accordance with the legislative provisions. Another revision of the program is planned for 2015.

Expectations for Ontario Principals

In Ontario, teachers wishing to become principals fulfill a number of requirements. Candidates must have an undergraduate university degree, a teacher certification that includes specialization in three of the four school divisions (primary, junior, intermediate, and/or senior), at least five years of teaching, either a master's degree; or two Specialist; or Honour Specialist Additional Qualifications, and have completed the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP).

The Principals Qualification Program (PQP) is regulated and accredited through the Ontario College of Teachers. The program "educate[s] future principals to lead and manage efficiently in contexts characterized by change and complexity" (Principal's Qualifications, n.d.). It consists of 125 hours of instruction with a 60 hour practicum. Because principals are members of the Ontario College of Teachers they are expected to abide by the standards of practice, ethical standards, and the professional learning framework of the College and the Ontario Leadership Framework. These ethical standards include: care, respect, trust, and integrity. Standards for practice include: professional knowledge, professional practice, leadership in learning communities, and ongoing professional learning. The professional learning framework consists of the following principles:

- The goal of professional learning is the ongoing improvement of practice,
- Standards-based professional learning provides for an integrated approach to teacher education,
- Exemplary professional learning opportunities are based on the principles of effective learning,
- Teachers plan for and reflect on their professional learning,

- Learning communities enhance professional learning.

Principals are guided by the revised 2012 Ontario Leadership Framework that is part of the province's larger Ontario leadership strategy. The Ontario Leadership framework consists of five core leadership competencies:

- *Setting directions*: building a shared vision, identifying specific, shared, short-term goals, creating high expectations, and communicating the vision and goals.
- *Building relationships and developing people*: providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members, stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff, modelling the school's values and practices, building trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and parents, and establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives.
- *Developing the organization to support desired practices*: building collaborative culture and distributing leadership, structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration, building productive relationships with families and the community, connecting the school to the wider environment, maintaining a safe and healthy environment, and allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals.
- *Improving the instructional program*: staffing the instructional program, providing instructional support, monitoring progress in student learning and school improvement, and buffering staff from distractions to their work.
- *Securing accountability*: building staff members' sense of internal accountability, meeting the demands for external accountability.

In addition, the Ontario framework includes personal leadership resources, seen as necessary to effectively enact leadership practices. These include: (a) cognitive resources, (b) social resources, and (c) psychological resources.

Expectations for Texas Principals

Education in the USA continues to follow the federal mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2012). The expectations for principals are described in the *Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards. Subchapter BB. Administrator Standards* (TEA, 2014a). The revised policy follows the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) efforts to review the standards and expectations for teachers in 1999. Before the Texas Education Agency involvement, SBEC recommended courses that should be included in programs, approved programs, and aligned certification requirements with certification exams (Murakami, Bing, Garza, & Thompson, 2010). To become a principal in Texas, educators must have at least two years of teaching experience, a master's degree from an accredited institution of higher education or region center, and pass a state exam to obtain a certificate (TEA, 2012a). Principals are required to be re-certified every 5 years. The standards inform the development of an examination required for obtaining principal certification (TEA, 2012a; 2013). There are five standards, divided into three parts: expectations of knowledge and skills for effective Texas school leaders, how effective leaders enact knowledge and skills, and indicators for each standard. For the purpose of this study, we summarize the expectations for knowledge and skills (TEA, 2014a) (New 19 TAC §149.2001, A.i only):

Standard 1--Instructional Leadership. The principal is responsible for ensuring every student receives high-quality instruction. Effective instructional leaders: (I) prioritize instruction and student achievement by developing and sharing a clear definition of high-quality instruction based on best practices from research; (II) implement a rigorous curriculum aligned with state

standards; (III) analyze the curriculum to ensure that teachers align content across grades and that curricular scopes and sequences meet the particular needs of their diverse student populations; (IV) model instructional strategies and set expectations for the content, rigor, and structure of lessons and unit plans; and (V) routinely monitor and improve instruction by visiting classrooms, giving formative feedback to teachers, and attending grade or team meetings.

Standard 2--Human Capital. The principal is responsible for ensuring there are high-quality teachers and staff in every classroom and throughout the school. (i) Effective leaders of human capital: (I) treat faculty/staff members as their most valuable resource and invest in the development, support, and supervision of the staff; (II) ensure all staff have clear goals and expectations that guide them and by which they are assessed; (III) are strategic in selecting and hiring candidates whose vision aligns with the school's vision and whose skills match the school's needs; (IV) ensure that, once hired, teachers develop and grow by building layered supports that include regular observations, actionable feedback, and coaching and school-wide supports so that teachers know how they are performing; (V) facilitate professional learning communities to review data and support development; (VI) create opportunities for effective teachers and staff to take on a variety of leadership roles and delegate responsibilities to staff and administrators on the leadership team; and (VII) use data from multiple points of the year to complete accurate evaluations of all staff, using evidence from regular observations, student data, and other sources to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and staff.

Standard 3--Executive Leadership. The principal is responsible for modeling a consistent focus on and commitment to improving student learning. (i) Effective executive leaders: (I) are committed to ensuring the success of the school; (II) motivate the school community by modeling a relentless pursuit of excellence; (III) are reflective in their practice and strive to continually improve, learn, and grow; (IV) view unsuccessful experiences as learning opportunities, remaining focused on solutions and are not stymied by challenges or setbacks. When a strategy fails, these principals analyze data, assess implementation, and talk with stakeholders to understand what went wrong and how to adapt strategies moving forward; (V) keep staff inspired and focused on the end goal even as they support effective change management; (VI) have strong communication skills and understand how to communicate a message in different ways to meet the needs of various audiences; (VII) are willing to listen to others and create opportunities for staff and stakeholders to provide feedback; and (VIII) treat all members of the community with respect and develop strong, positive relationships with them.

Standard 4--School Culture. The principal is responsible for establishing and implementing a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all staff and students. (i) Effective culture leaders: (I) leverage school culture to drive improved outcomes and create high expectations; (II) establish and implement a shared vision of high achievement for all students and use that vision as the foundation for key decisions and priorities for the school; (III) establish and communicate consistent expectations for staff and students, providing supportive feedback to ensure a positive campus environment; (IV) focus on students' social and emotional development and help students develop resiliency and self-advocacy skills; and (V) treat families as key partners to support student learning, creating structures for two-way communication and regular updates on student progress. Regular opportunities exist for both families and the community to engage with the school and participate in school functions.

Standard 5--Strategic Operations. The principal is responsible for implementing systems that align with the school's vision and improve the quality of instruction. (i) Effective leaders of strategic operations: (I) assess the current needs of their schools, reviewing a wide set of evidence to determine the schools' priorities and set ambitious and measurable school goals,

targets, and strategies that form the schools' strategic plans; (II) with their leadership teams, regularly monitor multiple data points to evaluate progress toward goals, adjusting strategies that are proving ineffective; (III) develop a year-long calendar and a daily schedule that strategically use time to both maximize instructional time and to create regular time for teacher collaboration and data review; (IV) are deliberate in the allocation of resources (e.g., staff time, dollars, and tools), aligning them to the school priorities and goals, and work to access additional resources as needed to support learning; and (V) treat central office staff as partners in achieving goals and collaborate with staff throughout the district to adapt policies as needed to meet the needs of students and staff.

Analyzing the Societal Dimensions in each Jurisdiction

Applying the dimensions of the societal culture to the expectations of principals within principal preparation documents for Sweden, the province of Ontario and the state of Texas we observed a number of similarities, some differences, and other patterns, which are analyzed in detail following Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Dimensions of Societal Culture in Sweden, Texas, and Ontario

	Dimensions of societal culture	Sweden	Texas	Ontario
1	Power-distributed/ Power-concentrated	Distributed	Distributed	Distributed
2	Group-oriented/ Self-oriented	Self-oriented	Self-oriented	Self-oriented/ group
3	Consideration/Aggression	Aggressive/ Considerate	Aggressive	Aggressive/ Considerate
4	Proactivism/Fatalism	Proactive but restrictive	Proactive	Proactive
5	Generative/ Replicative	Replicative to some degree	Generative to some degree	Replicative/ Generative
6	Limited relationship/ Holistic relationship	Limited with degree of holistic relationships	Limited relationship	Limited with degree of holistic relationships

Power-Distributed/Power-Concentrated Orientation

Dimmock and Walker (2005) acknowledged that all cultures involve power relationships. The authors modeled the power-distributed/power-concentrated orientation from Hofstede and Hofstede's (1991) power distance, observing that power is "either distributed more equally among the various levels of a culture or is concentrated among relatively few" (p. 30). We considered democratic values in the preparation expectations when comparing the landscape of Sweden, Texas, and Ontario in relation to *power distribution* (or *concentration*). Although neoliberal movements are in place in all jurisdictions, each jurisdiction also values democratic practices. All jurisdictions appeared to distribute power to some degree among the various institutional levels. Sweden provides national laws and regulations but does not require exams or academic preparation to become a principal. However, the expectations in Sweden include pedagogical understanding, training and experience, making school heads responsible for hiring principals. On the other hand, Texas and Ontario have governing bodies (The Texas Education Agency and The Ontario College of Teachers, respectively) to coordinate principal preparation. Texas is more prescriptive, requiring a University degree,

prior educational experience, and a certification exam to become a principal. Ontario has similar expectations, except for a certification exam.

Policy expectations revealed issues of power in principal practice. All jurisdictions recommend that principals share power and decision-making at their school site. Sweden's national curriculum reads, "all who work in the school shall ...", which indicates that responsibility ought to be shared equally throughout the school site. A further passage indicates that principals: "On completion of the training.... shall: demonstrate good ability as the head and leader of school personnel in managing and delegating work in order to maximize the learning and development of pupils" (Skolverket, 2010, p. 8). In Texas, principals are expected to be executive leaders, where "the principal is responsible for modeling a consistent focus on and commitment to improving student learning" (Standard 3, TEA 2014a). In Ontario, principals are expected to "nurture and empower a diverse workforce" and "develop a school culture which promotes shared knowledge and shared responsibility for outcomes" (The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), 2012, p. 3). However, few of the policies encourage principals to be involved in policy making outside of the school site. The OLF does state a leadership assumption that "leadership practices and competencies are distributed among members of school and system professional learning teams working together to accomplish goals." (IEL, p. 5) This could be interpreted to mean that principals working with system-level people may be involved in particular decision-making opportunities, but there was nothing explicit in the expectations for principals within their preparation documents.

Group-Orientation/Self-Orientation

This category considers whether the people within "a given culture tend to focus on *self* or on their place within a *group*" (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 30). Principal expectations in all three jurisdictions focused on the individual more than the group. In Sweden, principals are expected to be pedagogical leaders, demonstrating skills related to legislation, management, and leadership. The principal is expected to be a role model, and as such, "shall ... provide a democratic model to pupils and personnel by creating an open communicative climate" (Skolverket, 2010, p.8). In Texas, principals are expected to develop the school culture, where "the leader is responsible for establishing and implementing a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all students" (Standard 4, TEA, 2014a). In both contexts, individual orientations were more prominent over collective ones, even though they allude to the latter. Ontario included a combination of both group and individual orientation. On the one hand principals are expected to "lead by example," but on the other hand, the OLF emphasizes that leaders should "motivate and work with others to create a shared culture and positive climate" and "actively engage the diverse community, through outreach, to build relationship and alliances." It is noted that the OLF is not a stand-alone document but also includes a second document written by Ken Leithwood; *The OLF 2012: A discussion of Research Foundations*, recognizing that groups of people rather than individuals change and improve education systems.

Consideration/Aggression

Dimmock and Walker (2005) refer to *aggression cultures* as those in which "achievement is stressed, and competition dominates" (p. 30), especially in societies where reward systems exist, and assertiveness is taken as a virtue. *Consideration* societies emphasize "relationships, solidarity and resolution of conflicts by comparison and negotiation" (p. 30). All three jurisdictions display some degree of aggressive orientation. Sweden's *consideration* model has in short order shifted into an aggressive approach, with competition to perform, creating a direct connection between principals and student achievement. Sweden's goals of the

National School Leadership Training Programme (Skolverket, 2010), stress that the “head teacher is responsible for the results achieved by the school, and also for follow up and evaluation in relation to the national goals” (Skolverket, 2010 p. 4). As the document demonstrates, restructuring towards academic achievement and increased testing altered prerequisites for principals into demand and control. The demands were evidenced through the “systematic quality work” formulated in binding laws and regulations (SFS2010:800, 2010). The curricula (Lgr11, 2011) states: “The head teacher is also responsible for following up and evaluating school results in relation to the national goals and the knowledge requirements” (p. 20). The control is carried out by the inspectorate who scrutinizes principals in relation to laws and regulations (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2014).

In Ontario the OLF states, “a substantial and growing body of professional knowledge and research... demonstrates a direct and powerful link between effective leadership and improved student achievement and well-being” (IEL, p. 12). The OLF also states, “school leaders are pivotal to the development of excellent teaching, excellent schools and ultimately, enhanced student achievement and well-being” (IEL, p. 14). However, there is still an element of “consideration culture”:

While formal authority in a school rests with leaders such as principals, vice-principals and aspiring leaders, the reality is that many people in the school can and do provide leadership, including teachers, parents, and students. At the system level, leadership is shared across academic and business leaders as well as board trustees. The OLF recognizes the importance of sharing leadership purposefully and in a coordinated way to create a more democratic organization, provide greater opportunity for collective learning and teacher development...(IEL, p. 5)

Texas suggests a shared vision of high achievement, where “the principal is responsible for establishing and implementing a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all staff and students” (Standard 4, TEA, 2014a). As in the other jurisdictions, aggressive practices towards competition in Texas include principal preparation under data-driven decision-making, a drive toward improved student outcomes (TEA, 2014b; 2014c) and methods for quality monitoring and accountability (TEA, 2014d).

Proactivism/Fatalism

Proactive cultures possess the “we can change things” attitude, while cultures with a *fatalistic* attitude appear to accept things as they are. Dimmock and Walker (2005) argue, “people tend to believe that they have at least some control over situations and over change” (p. 31). All jurisdictions in this study demonstrate some degree of proactivism. Sweden appears to be the most restricted by legislative demands. When generating change, principals are expected to have an overview of the existing conditions and implement national goals (Skolverket 2010, p. 3). In turn, Texas principals are expected to transform their schools through a proactive attitude. Terms such as “motivation” and “commitment to excellence” can be found in the documents. Similarly, the Ontario framework use terms such as “encouraging others,” but it also contains personal leadership resources such as cognitive, social, and physiological resources including: “believing in our own ability to perform a task or achieve a goal” and “habitually expecting positive results from our efforts” (IEL, p. 23).

Generative/Replicative Orientation

Some cultures are more predisposed toward innovation, assert Dimmock and Walker (2005), while others are “more inclined to *replicate* ideas from elsewhere” (p. 31). Language in documents for all jurisdictions studied demonstrated some push for performance measures

that could be interpreted as an infusion of global neoliberal influence on education or a form of replication as demonstrated in previous dimensions.

However, it was also observed that the OLF was informed by evidence generated from “more than eight years of research by leading experts and extensive consultation with educators across Ontario... and around the world” (IEL, p. 3). We could argue that the OLF was created through a replication from other jurisdictions *and* through research and insights from practitioners. In turn, when compared to other countries, where guidelines for principal preparation stem directly from governmental offices, the state of Texas seemed to *generate* more than replicate expectations. The Texas Education Agency reviewed reports from national forums such as ISSLC (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013) as well as documents from New Leaders (2013) and the Wallace Foundation’s (2013) to guide the applicability of standards in the state.

Limited/Holistic Relationship

Dimmock and Walker (2005) explain *limited relationship* cultures as those with interactions and relationships that are determined by rules that apply equally to everyone. *Holistic* relationships, on the other hand, are driven by “complex, personal considerations rather than by the specific situation or by formal rules and regulations” (p. 31). Some would argue that the very nature of policies is to establish guidelines, rules, and regulations. In this case, limited relationship cultures where tasks, performance, and competence are valued and measured in order to control the principal preparation.

Sweden displays both kinds of relationships. Limited relationship is demonstrated in the expectation that every principal complete the national training program, and exam. However, remnants of holistic relationships are evident in leading schools (SFS 2011:183, 2011), with “specific conditions apply[ing] to their own school, its tradition and history, its working climate, the composition of personnel and pupils, geographic conditions, local political decisions, and other conditions” (Skolverket, 2010, p.3). Ontario’s PQP is similarly highly regulated, and in Texas, requirements for certification (master’s degree; teaching certificate; two years of teaching experience; completed principal preparation program; and completed exam), or certification renewals for principals (every 5 years) (TEA, 2012b) seem to be more structured than holistic.

Through this framework we were able to compare a number of categories. From these documents, degrees of similarities and differences were analyzed. In the following section we discuss some of these findings.

Discussion

The framework’s notion of societal culture allowed us to consider the expectations of principals in their respective principal preparation programs within Sweden, Texas, and Ontario. We compared how each jurisdiction has shaped principal preparation and the work that principals do in their role. It is apparent that each jurisdiction executes its control over principals through legislation and policies. Principals were positioned to have school-site decision-making power with limited distribution between the various levels of the school systems. While no demonstration of explicit centralized power within each jurisdiction was articulated, it was clear that decision-making had distinct boundaries. It was shown that each jurisdiction displayed an individual orientation. Ontario policies appeared to make an effort to capture the reality of education systems: that the work of principals does not occur within a vacuum, but exists within a larger complex organizational system. Ontario policies reflected this by acknowledging that the work of principals occurs *with* groups of people. In terms of whose interests are served (those of the individual or those of the group), all jurisdictions leaned towards an aggressive orientation, with principals being responsible for individual

interests and accountability for student achievement. Analyzing the documents with a proactive/restrictive lens demonstrated that all jurisdictions expected principals to believe they had some degree of power over their individual situations. Sweden engaged in replicative practices; Ontario combined both replicative and generative approaches; and Texas had autonomy for generative practices. The category least helpful in the analysis was *limited/holistic relationships* because we could not report the kinds of relationships in which principals engage in their work. We analyzed what was expected of principals within principal preparation programs not what was actually happening in schools.

Each jurisdiction differed slightly, but overall several general patterns were found. We argue that cross-jurisdictional patterns can be attributed to powerful global neoliberal ideologies assuming that education ought to be driven by performance-based measures to demonstrate effectiveness. What has emerged is a retraction of state power in one aspect of education and a re-instatement of state power in another component. Principals are expected to be innovative at their school site, yet work within conformity in a system that is highly prescriptive (Höög, Bredeson, & Johansson, 2006). Political efforts within each jurisdiction attempt to control the role of principals, not by forcing practicing principals to abide by established norms, but by influencing the way that principals prepare for the role.

Conclusion

In summary, the comparative document analysis of expectations for principals within principal preparation programs in Sweden, the province of Ontario (Canada), and the state of Texas (USA) explored the various dimensions within societal cultures can be used to examine and compare the expectations of principals. This study reveals how the performance of principals is guided by societal cultures. The study could also be extended to consider policies as cultural artifacts, in addition to analyzing the work of school principals in each jurisdiction. In order to improve schools around the globe, principals are important in the lives of students, and most significantly, in promoting educational change, reform, and positive influence on schools and society.

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